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DISTRIBUTION AND CHANGED ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STATUS
OF POLISH RURAL POPULATION

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[Comment: The following information taken from an article by Jerzy Tepicht, director of the Institute of Farm Economy, entitled "Worker Peasant Alliance Under the New Constitution," gives comparative figures on the distribution of the Polish rural population, increased peasant earning power, individual peasant holdings, and peasant participation in government administration. Although the information is not recent, most of it is probably still valid and indicates the changed complexion of Polish agriculture.]

Distribution of Rural Population

The change in the social structure of the Polish rural areas is shown in the following table:

	<u>Percent of Total Rural Population</u>	
	<u>1931</u>	<u>1950</u>
Large estates	0.2	--
Farm laborers on private farms	11.9	1.9
Individual peasant farms (3 ha)	14.4	7.6
Individual peasant farms (2-5 ha)	26.5	20.4
Individual peasant farms (5-10 ha)	18.9	26.8
Individual peasant farms (10-14 ha)	4.8*	7.5
Individual peasant farms (14 ha or more)	3.0*	4.0
Producers cooperatives, members	--	1.5
PGR (state farms) workers	--	3.4
Others (laborers, technical farm experts)	20.3	26.9

* Date for 1931 gave holding limits in these items as 15 hectares, 1950 data as 14 hectares. The 1950 data, based on the 1950 census, are not final since tabulations have not yet been completed.

Increased Peasant Earning Power

In 1938, the Instytut Pulawski (Pulawy Institute) collected information on a group of families in Rzeszow Wojewodztwo; in the fall of 1951, the Instytut Ekonomiki Rolnej (Institute of Agricultural Economics) collected information on the same group. The large numerical increase in the group would have been considered catastrophic before World War II. Under present conditions, some family

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members are employed in industry and others are settled on farms in the Recovered Territories, thus increasing the earning power of the families. For example, in 1938 the value of clothing owned by one adult male was 49.86 zlotys, whereas now it is 139.52 zlotys in 1938 prices. The average value of clothing for one female increased from 50.84 to 121.35 zlotys at 1938 prices. The value of bedding increased from 10.35 to 41.05 zlotys; annual per-capita consumption of soap of these families increased from 1.16 kilograms to 6.55 kilograms, matches from 4 to 51 boxes, and sugar from 0.26 to 18.39 kilograms. These figures indicate a great improvement in an area which before the war was among the most neglected areas in Poland.

Individual Peasant Holdings

At present, the individual peasant farms comprise 97.5 percent of the total agricultural land in Poland. According to Nowe Drogi of August 1953, the figure was about 82 percent in 1957.

Peasant Participation in Government Administration

As of 1 April 1951, the People's Councils had 97,938 members. For each council member there were at least ten members in various commissions and committees checking on the activities or operations of the gmina cooperatives, machine centers, credit offices, schools, or, in some instances, even managing state property. Fifty percent of the hundreds of thousands engaged in these activities are peasants. Forty percent of the members of People's Councils are peasants and 12 percent are of peasant extraction.

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